(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what are the particulars of persons arrested for manufacturing, selling and purchasing such country-made weapons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) On receipt of information a police party from Police Station Vivek Vihar raided a jhuggi in New Sanjay Amar Colony and found one person busy manufacturing weapons. The police recovered one finished weapon, three semi-finished weapons, arms manufacturing equipment, etc.

The interrogation of the accused person has led to the arrest of three others who had purchased arms from him.

Wage Board for Mini Cement Plants

293. SHRI SUBAS MOHANTY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up a Wage Board for the employees working in the mini cement plants; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the Wage Board is expected to start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

UN sponsored study on Deforestation

294. SHRI SUBAS MOHANTY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a recent UN sponsored study according to which 27 million acres of forests are being destroyed annually;

(b) if so, the acreage of forests destroyed annually in India; and

(c) what steps are being taken to check deforestation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to studies of Satellite imagery by the National Remote Sensing Agency, the annual rate of deforestation in India during 1972—75 to 1980—82 was approximately 1.3 million hectares per annum.

(c) the following steps have been taken by the Government to check deforestation:—

1. Enactment and enforcement of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

2. Guidelines have been issued to the state governments to:—

(i) avoid clearfelling of natural forests for rajsing plantations as far as possible. Where such felling are unavoidable due to restorations of crop or other silvicultural considerations, it should be restricted to areas not exceeding 10 ha. in the hills and 20 ha. in the plains. In no case good natural forests should be clearfelled in prefernce to poorly stocked natural forests.

(ii) ban all fellings above an altitude of 1000 meters atleast for some years.

(iii) to earmark 4 per cent of the geographical area as portec-